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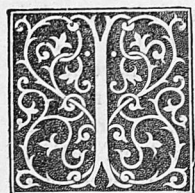
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# The Art Gallery

BOSTON CORRESPONDENCE.

PICTURES FROM AMERICAN ARTISTS IN FRANCE—WORKS BY BACON, PICKNELL, BLASHFIELD, PEARCE, BLACKMAN, BRIDGMAN, AND OTHERS—BRADFORD'S ARCTIC AND YOSEMITE PAINTINGS.



INTEREST in the great collection of paintings made by the Mechanics' Association is unabated, and the rushing human tide that surges through the galleries has apparently not yet reached its flood. Two artists of Parisian experience affirm that this exhibition is quite equal in quality to the average Salon display, and when one remembers the tentative character of much of the Salon work, the statement is not incredible. The contingent of some fifty pictures from American artists in France, selected and sent by Bacon and Picknell, is a strong element in the exhibition. Bacon's own large canvas, "The Burial at Sea," is prominent among them. It is, no doubt, a fine work, but, for myself, the best that I can do is to grant it a shuddering and reluctant approval. Why should an artist force upon me a subject which chills and saddens? Even good painting cannot make atonement for a dismal and repellent scene. Whatever pleasure I get from Mr. Bacon's excellent technique is extinguished in the pain excited by his unlucky subject. I know that people are sometimes buried at sea. I may have read or heard that the dead body in such cases is wrapped in canvas, lashed to a board, and pushed over the vessel's side, with such scant ceremony as life on the ocean allows. I can endure such a relation of facts in a newspaper or poem, but by all mankind's sacred love of the beautiful, I beseech the painter not to perpetuate such scenes! If authority be needed to strengthen this plea it is furnished by such philosophical art critics as Lessing and Goethe.

A very different picture is Picknell's large landscape, "The Border of the Marsh." The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts is the fortunate owner of this strong and splendid work. There is absolutely nothing in it that requires forgiveness or even indulgence. What most landscapists forget Mr. Picknell has remembered. For the completest communion with nature, we require that no human being shall cross our path. The artist has respected this condition in his picture. A solitary stork, pausing on the edge of the slow stream that feels its way through the swampy foreground, makes the loneliness more profound. Otherwise there is utter repose in the scene, not even

a distant bird or officious butterfly. At the left centre is a thin clump of tall trees, one of the tallest draped in the clinging, dark-green moss of southern climates. A broken stump, tall and gaunt, shrouds its awkwardness in the same rich garment. The sparse leafiness of the trees and the brown and purple hues of the sedge show the season to be late October. The sky is full of a strong and uniform white light, such as occurs where a bright sun moves behind thin clouds. There are no streaks and flashes such as our new-born impressionist delights in, but an equable and steady brightness. The bank on which the trees grow has the honest solidity of earth, and the heavy grasses show the stubborn toughness of their kind. The picture is beautiful enough to lull one into a dream and stimulating enough to act as an intellectual tonic. The vigorous treatment of ground and trees recalls the healthy style of Constable. A few more artists of this independent method, and a few exhibitions of equally fine work, would go far to banish the splashy landscape style which is so eager to usurp the precious space of our

approach of relieving forces to a besieged city has been very well met. It does not seem a scene of blood, although the battering-rams and smoke of fires from the enemy are close beneath the walls. The besieging army is no longer the chief solicitude of the anxious people. Their eyes see the distant dust-cloud that assures them their suspense is ended. All the hands and arms are stretching and gesturing in one direction. Only one withered dame kneels in grateful recognition of the gods. The wonder is that so complicated a subject could have been executed with so few faults, although, of course, in a severe composition like this, we look for good execution as a matter of course, and expect the artist to put his strength into the conception itself, to avoid contradictions, and to create a picture which shall satisfy philosophy as well as art.

Frank M. Boggs' "Fishing Boat at Dieppe" is a huge, leaden-colored canvas. The sand, the houses, the plodding peasants, the sky, the boat itself (with its great mildewed sail which seems to have the opacity of birch bark), all are of the same sombre color. Even

the trees on the shore have barely escaped the inky baptism. The peasants are noticeably true to life, and seem to be doing more gossiping than unloading.

Charles Sprague Pearce sends three pictures, not one of which will be likely to add to his reputation here, though they received honorable mention from the Salon judges. His "Decapitation of John the Baptist" is unsatisfactory and depressing. Why should so much fair talent and good paint be wasted upon an unlovely subject? Grief may legitimately be painted. Its contemplation stirs sympathy. But I protest that death, murder, and penal execution are not true themes for the painter. Art should have no business with these things, only with their ef-



COSTUME SKETCHES FROM "PATIENCE." BY PILOTELL.

galleries. Picknell sends one other picture, shown at the Salon last year; it is a Moorish interior, and is a fine rendering of the luxurious and inactive temperament of its occupant. Physical comfort is the evident ideal of the reclining Moor. His face is not dull or severe, but shows an intellectual gleam of the order that spends itself in devising self-gratification. The fringed robe, red cap, green and white cushions, and the inevitable chibouque, are realistic enough; while the panther skin spread upon the floor has a dangerous glare painted into the eye, which makes one step suddenly back and question whether the invisible boundary between still life and life itself has not here been crossed.

E. H. Blashfield's "Deliverance," also fresh from the Paris Salon, hangs near Picknell's "Moor." The difficulty of painting more than twenty figures of warriors, women, and children, in exultant excitement over the

fects upon others. A beautiful picture by Karl Hoff in the Royal Gallery at Berlin, illustrates what I mean. It is called "Die Taufe des Nachgeborenen," the christening of a child born after its father's death. All of the painful story which we care to know is told by the artist without the infliction of the most harrowing features. We can realize the father's loss without seeing him upon his death-bed. Good art understands how to make a picture do duty in summoning up the past. Mr. Pearce's "Baptist" shows no sign of heroism. He kneels on the stone floor in most abject submission. The flight of steps is well painted, as well as the robe of the Roman soldier; but these are straws in the scale against the mistake of a false subject. His "Spinning Girl and Picardy Peasant," show strange flesh-tints, unlikely to occur in any terrestrial climate.

Walter Blackman also sends three pictures, "The Pilot's Look-out," "Peace of the Evening," and



"Lake Maggiore." His color is fine, his subjects full of sentiment, and the recollection of his work stirs pleasant memories. The three scenes seem taken from one locality. The same blue lake and the same curved lines of wooden piles appear in each. The two men in the pilot-boat are eagerly alert, bending forward to get the last use of the lessening daylight. The fishing-net hanging over the side of the market boat lets us see the lake through its meshes in excellent perspective. F. D. Williams sends a landscape from the Salon of last year, "Outskirts of Fontainebleau." It leaves his previous landscapes far behind. The tiresome thatched cottage has been left out. The brown and green valley with the jostling crowd of sheep is pleasant enough to repay a good deal of attention. The dark-green forest is a little sketchy, but with the yellow birches in front and the lively pursuit of two belated sheep by a small shepherd's dog at the left, we are sufficiently occupied and interested. F. A. Bridgman's new and beautiful interior, "Bey of Constantine Receiving Guests from Syria," gives a chance for difficult perspective which the artist has triumphantly used. The shadows of the pillars and the stately movement of these dignified Orientals along the polished floors are given with delightful ease and truth.

Two companion pastorals have been sent from Ecouen, France, by Miss C. R. Murdoch, "May in an Old Land," and "La Barrière." In the latter two children are leaning on a stile and looking over a low campagna-like stretch of country. The impression of distance and dimness and blending sky and horizon is excellently conveyed. Flocks of sheep appear in both pictures—sheep of all sizes and ages—little lambs who still stand in staggering uncertainty upon untried feet, and dingy-looking ewes that lie apart from the rest in sleepy comfort. There is sufficient variety of expression and attitude to suggest the idea of animal individuality. The first impression of color is unfavorable from the paleness of the greens, but this impression disappears with study. Another Ecouen picture is "September Morning at Maplehurst," by Thos. Allen, Jr. The fields have a brownness which almost bespeaks sterility; yet the Jersey cows in the foreground look radiantly comfortable. Animal characteristics are appropriately brought out. The cows are grouped in sleepy gregariousness, while two horses, independent and business-like, are browsing at a distance.

Two very large pictures, both straight from the

Salon, are "Christ in the midst of the Doctors," and "The Prodigal Son," from the brushes of Frank Moss and Chas. E. Moss, respectively. It seems likely that these pictures could hardly have been painted for sale, but rather as studies. In the "Christ in the Temple," the artist has struggled with a false conception. No rational student of Palestinian history conceives the child Jesus as the spectral being that he is upon Mr. Moss's canvas. The work upon the figures of the Jewish doctors is creditable—much of it is excellent. The hard features, bald heads, sparse hair, powerful shoulders, and naked feet are well done. But the con-

with a very matronly cat; Mrs. St. John's "Sleeping and Waking King Charles" spaniels; Phebe D. Natt's "Moor's Head," and Otto Wolff's "Little Minstrel."

Another exhibition is taking place this week at the art gallery of Williams & Everett. We have here the satisfaction of studying an artist's power from a full representative collection. Twenty-two pictures from the brush of William Bradford give us a chance for a fair estimate of his artistic strength. Some thirteen years ago he bought an English ship, the "Panther," and sailed to the Arctic Seas in search of material for

pictures. Returning after a seven years' stay he spent six summers in the Yosemite. The twenty-two pictures give a full record of his wanderings. The startling color of the Arctic scenery would call forth certain censure but for the artist's assurance of its truth. Five pictures are of glittering icebergs under the midnight sun. The vivid rose-color and deep magenta, multiplied in quantity by the water reflections, make the pictures glow like coal-fires. Five other Arctic scenes amaze us quite as much by their dazzling whites and intense blues, until we learn that the shadowed portions of icebergs are invariably deep blue under common daylight. "Entering the Unknown" shows the "Panther" steering into a pitchy blackness of cloud and water so mysteriously repellent that the great iceberg which she is leaving behind looks friendly and attractive by contrast. Another large painting shows the famous "Resolute" of the Franklin Relief Expedition nipped fast in the ice with a half dozen American whalers. The views of the coasts of Labrador and Greenland, the high shores tufted with reindeer moss and the tiny pink icebergs in the distance, make agreeable pictures. The Yosemite of Mr. Bradford is quite another region from



VIEW OF GEO. W. EDWARDS' STUDIO. DRAWN BY HIMSELF.

ception is exaggerated. Their attitudes are too stage-like. They are too much astounded by the wisdom of the pale boy before them. It is a repetition of the common fault of young artists, actors, and authors—exaggeration of effects. The "Prodigal Son" is such a picture of hopeless squalor and degradation that the sequel of the fatted calf and the festival of return seems incredible. One cannot believe that a being so utterly forlorn as the wretch in this picture could by any possibility return to civilization. Many of the smaller pictures of the contingent from France materially aid in elevating the general character of the contribution. Such are Dolph's "Three Melodies," three scrambling kittens

that of Bierstadt. One feels no inclination to dream in looking at these reproductions; for reproductions they are in the fullest meaning of the word. Undoubtedly the wonderful valley is painted as the artist saw it, and if he looked at it without the spectacles of imagination, or even without strong emotion, and simply busied himself with rendering actual rocks, trees, and sunsets, who shall say that he was unfaithful to his high vocation. "Mount Hood" is a really strong and splendid landscape, although it has none of the mystery which modern taste looks for in such work. Mr. Bradford's reputation has been chiefly made in England. Queen Victoria, the Baroness Bur-

dett-Coutts, Earl Grosvenor, and others are owners of his Arctic paintings. He can therefore afford to miss the pleasure of winning a new American fame. Whether one likes his work or not depends upon what one demands in a picture. If an artist chooses to be the servant of science as well as of art, he will at any rate be sure of support from those who want pictures for information as well as for inspiration. ALPHA.

#### THE RECENT CHICAGO EXHIBITION.

THE art exhibition at the recent Inter-State Industrial Exposition of Chicago was very creditable. The seven hundred numbers of the catalogue included many well-known paintings by European artists, lent for the occasion by the owners, and an excellent selection of casts of famous works of sculpture. The educational value of these latter is very great and the good sense of the managers of the exhibition in giving them the prominence they did speaks well for the future of similar enterprises in this country. In the handsome catalogue, illustrated with sketches of many of the American pictures by the artists themselves, explanatory notes were given concerning the Elgin marbles and other famous antiques in the British Museum, the Louvre, and the other great collections of Europe. Comparisons of ancient and modern sculpture were made easy by the placing in juxtaposition casts of such works as the noble "Diana Robing" in the Louvre, Canova's plagiarism of the Venus de Medici, Gibson's "Tinted Venus," and Thorwaldsen's "Venus Victrix."

The exhibition of American paintings cannot be called even fairly representative, with the conspicuous absence of names of such men as Bierstadt, Bridgman, Coleman, Knight, Humphrey Moore, Sargent, and Vedder. No pictures of particular importance were shown not previously seen in New York, although Mr. F. Hopkinson Smith sent on his nineteen Cuban sketches, made during his recent trip to the West Indies. Picknell's "Route de Concarneau," and Boughton's "The Return of the Mayflower," were lent by Mr. Fairman Rogers. The following artists were represented by the pictures named: George Inness, "An Old Roadway"; Frank Waller, "Temple of Kom Ombo," and "Interior Metropolitan Museum"; George Fuller, "The Quadroon," "A Reminiscence of Sicily"; Eastman Johnson, "The Funding Bill"; Hovenden, "Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady"; Sartain, "A Quiet Moment"; Chas. H. Miller, "Sunset at East Hampton, L. I."; W. T. Richards, "The Cliffs of St. Levant"; Bunce, "Venetian Boats"; Thomas Moran, "The Cliffs of Green River"; Edward Moran, "Homeward Bound," "Toilers of the Fields"; Wm. Hart, "Twilight"; Thomas Moran, "Three Mile Harbor," "Sunset, Long Island Coast"; Louis C. Tiffany, "View in Italy." Jervis McEntee sent "Autumn Woods"; R. W. Van Boskerck, "An October Landscape"; Leon Moran, "The Salute"; Percy Moran, "Day Dreams"; Dielman, "October"; Jas. D. Smillie, "Evening Shadows"; Arthur Parton, "The Old Toll Gate"; J. H. Beard, "A Bird in the Hand," "Can't Fool Me"; A. T. Bricher, "Wreck at Atlantic City"; A. H. Wyant, "The Storm," "An Old Road in Moriah"; W. S. Macy, "Winter Sunset"; Arthur Quartley, "Dartmouth Marshes," "A Calm Morning," "An April Day, New York," and "After the Rain"; W. M. Chase, "Portrait of a Lady"; Shurtleff, "Autumn Gold," "Blue Heron"; J. G. Brown, "Full Blown," "His Face was Furrowed"; M. F. H. de Haas, "At Montauk Point"; Samuel Colman, "Sunset on the Pacific Coast." The hanging committee have received less notice than is usually accorded to the official headsmen on such an occasion; for the reason, perhaps, that the effort to give every one "the best place" was more successful than ordinarily. Van Boskerck and Verboeckhoven, Inness, and Diaz, Macy and Jacque hung side by side, cheek by jowl, in a manner that showed the committee's unbounded confidence in the ability of American art to hold its own under all circumstances. We do not know how this arrangement would have struck the eminent deceased, but it must, we suppose, have been highly gratifying to the living.

THE Brush electric light has been introduced into the court of the South Kensington Museum containing Sir Frederick Leighton's recently executed mural painting, it being feared that the work might be injured by gas.

#### AN ALLEGED MICHAEL ANGELO.

THERE has been a prolonged discussion in London art circles lately as to the authorship of "The Entombment," the famous unfinished picture in the National Gallery, generally held to be the work of Michael Angelo, but also attributed in previous controversies to Ghirlandajo, Mantegna, Pottajuolo, Verocchio, and others. Mr. J. C. Robinson, whose name is honorably associated with the South Kensington Museum, boldly declares it to be by Baccio Bandinelli. Mr. Poynter, Director of the National Gallery, Mr. Burton, and a host of other experts, controvert the claim with what seem to be overpowering arguments, and leave little doubt that this masterpiece—all contestants agree that it is such, whoever the artist may be—is an early production of Michael Angelo. The Athenæum is quite sure that Bandinelli did not paint the picture. "We quite fail to see," it says, "that it exhibits any of the types which Baccio employed. That artist's draughtsmanship is loose, not to say incorrect; his modeling is deficient in fruits of searching studies; his mode of composition has little or no compression; his groups, like the parts of his single figures, need coherence and concentration of the attitudes, actions, and, above all, of the motives they were designed to express. In short, Baccio's technical and mental grasp of his materials shows neither the completeness nor the spontaneity which glorify the picture in question, which in all these respects is absolutely antithetical to his work, and shows such transcendently grand expression, such dignity and pathos of air and movement; as no one before Mr. Robinson has ventured to attribute to him. . . . If not to Michael Angelo, we do not hesitate to ascribe it (the painting in question) to Ghirlandajo, his teacher. It shows, we think, a compound of the powers of both painters such as could only be due to the youth of the former."

#### SOME CRUIKSHANK DRAWINGS.

AN interesting collection of original sketches by George Cruikshank, nearly a hundred in number, has been acquired by Mr. J. W. Bouton. They are in lead pencil, pen-and-ink, wash, and we noticed two or three—there may be more—in pure water color. All are framed. In some instances the original drawing and an impression of the engraving appear together. Some frontispiece designs for books long out of print are not the least valuable numbers in the collection. Among these is a pencil sketch, lightly washed with sepia, of "Cakes and Ale," by Douglas Jerrold, published by the extinct firm of How & Parsons, in Fleet Street, and a sketch in pen-and-ink for a frontispiece for "The Enchanted Garden," with the humorous conceit of a youth sliding down a rainbow. The collection, we are informed, has only just been rescued from chancery, where it has long been tied up; which probably accounts for its being in the market, for the English devotees of Cruikshankiana rarely let a scrap from the later Hogarth escape them. With the exception of Mr. John B. Gough, the temperance lecturer, we know of no American who has what might be called an important collection of Cruikshank's drawings.

## The Print Collector.

#### CAUTIONS TO COLLECTORS.

THE collector of prints may be first cautioned against indulging a desire to become possessed of all the works of any master. There are no masters whose works in the gross deserve notice. No man is equal to himself in all his compositions. We have known a collector of Rembrandt ready to give any price for a print or two, which he wanted to complete his collection; though it had been to Rembrandt's credit if those prints had been suppressed. There is no doubt that if one-third of the works of this master should be tried by the rules of just criticism, they would appear of little value. The great Prince Eugene, it is said, was a collector of this kind, and piqued himself upon having in his possession all the works of all the masters. His collection was bulky and cost eighty thousand pounds; but when sifted, could not, in that day, be worth as many hundreds.

The collector of prints may, secondly, be cautioned against a superstitious veneration of names. A true judge leaves the master out of the question, and only examines the work. But with a little genius nothing sways like a great name. It carries a wonderful force; covers glaring faults, and creates imaginary beauties. That species of criticism is certainly just which examines the different manners of different masters, with a view to discover in how many ways a good effect may be produced, and which produces the best. But to be curious in finding out a master, in order *there* to rest the judgment, is a kind of criticism very paltry and illiberal. It is judging of the work by the master, instead of the master by the work. Hence it is that such vile prints as the "Woman in the Cauldron," and "Mount Parnassus," obtain credit among connoisseurs. If you ask wherein the beauty consists? you are informed, they are engraved by Marc Antonio; and if that does not satisfy you, you are further assured they are after Raphael. This absurd taste raised an honest indignation in that ingenious artist Picart; who having shown the world, by his excellent imitations, how ridiculous it is to pay a blind veneration to names, tells us that he had compared some of the engravings of the ancient masters with the original pictures, and found them very bad copies. He speaks of the stiffness, which in general runs through them, of the hair of children which resembles pot-hooks—and of the ignorance of those engravers of anatomy, drawing, and the distribution of light.

A third caution, which may be of use in collecting prints is, not to rate their value by their scarceness. Scarceness will make a valuable print more valuable; but to make scarceness the standard of a print's value, is to mistake an accident for a merit. This folly is founded on vanity; and arises from a desire of possessing what nobody else can possess. The want of real merit is made up by imaginary; and the object is intended to be kept, not looked at. Yet, absurd as this false taste is, nothing is more common; and a trifling genius may be found who will give fifty dollars for Hollar's shells, which, valued according to their real merit, the scarcity of them being added to the account, are not worth more than as many dimes. Instances in abundance might be collected of the prevalence of this folly. Le Clerc, in his print of "Alexander's Triumph," had given a profile of that prince. The print was shown to the Duke of Orleans, who was pleased with it on the whole, but justly enough objected to the side face. The obsequious artist erased it, and engraved a full one. A few impressions had been taken from the plate in its first state, which fell among the curious for ten times the price of the impressions taken after the face was altered. Callot, once, pleased with a little plate of his own etching, made a hole in it, through which he drew a ribbon, and wore it at his button. The impressions after the hole was made, are very scarce and amazingly valuable! Vandyke etched a print of the Holy Family, in which St. John was represented laying his hand upon the Virgin's shoulder. The print, before it was published, was shown among his critical friends, some of whom thought the action of St. John too familiar. The painter was convinced, and removed the hand. But he was mistaken when he thought he added value to his print by the alteration. The impressions which got abroad with the hand upon the shoulder would buy up all the rest, three times over, in any auction in London or Paris.

Many of Rembrandt's prints receive infinite value from little accidental alterations of this kind. A few impressions were taken from one plate, before a dog was introduced; from another, before a white horsetail was turned into a black one; from a third, before a sign-post was inserted at an ale house door, and all the scarce prints from these plates, though altered for the better, are the prints of value! The rest are common and cheap! We shall conclude these instances with a story of a late celebrated collector of pictures. He was showing his collection with great satisfaction; and after expatiating upon many noble works by Guido, Marratti, and other masters, he turned suddenly to the gentleman whom he attended, and, "Now, sir," said he, "I'll show you a real curiosity; there is a Woverman without a horse in it." The circumstance, it is true, was uncommon; but it was unluckily the very circumstance which made the picture of little real value.

Let the collector of prints be cautioned, fourthly, to beware of buying copies for originals. Most of the